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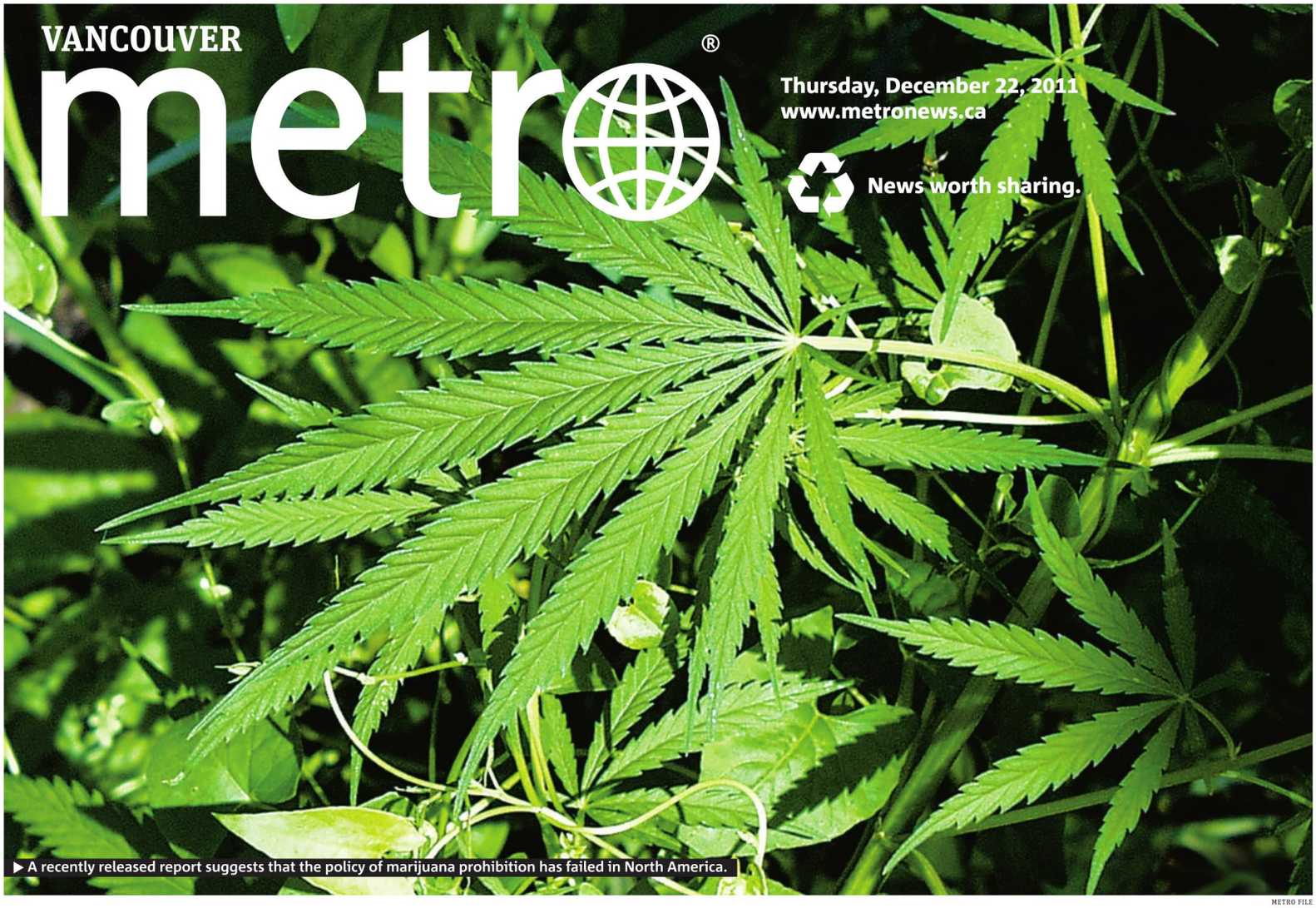

▶ A recently released report suggests that the policy of marijuana prohibition has failed in North America.

METRO FILE

Weed war up in smoke

Government data in report show increased funding for anti-drug efforts not effective, coalition says
Law-enforcement expenditures and arrests are not keeping pot away from the hands of B.C. youth

Increased funding for anti-marijuana law enforcement in both Canada and the United States has failed to decrease marijuana supply, potency and use, a new report suggests.

The report entitled How Not to Protect Community Health and Safety: What the Government's Own Data Say About the Effects of Cannabis Prohibition, released by Stop the Violence BC, uses 20 years of data collected by the Canadian and U.S. governments.

"It's an audit of the governments' own data and what it shows ... is that cannabis prohibition has been a spectacular failure, despite pretty astronomical increases in funding for anti-marijuana law enforcement," said Dr. Evan Wood, a physician and founder of Stop the Violence BC, a coalition of prominent police officers, health professionals, legal experts and academics.

The report shows that in Canada at least $260 million in government funding has been given to the National Anti-Drug Strategy since 2007, with the majority allocated toward anti-drug law efforts. Canada has also seen a 70 per cent increase in arrests for cannabis-related offences, up to 65,000 in 2009 from 39,000 in 1990.

Despite the hike in funding and arrests, Wood points out the current system fuels gang warfare and youth in B.C. still have easier access to pot than cigarettes or alcohol.

The 2009 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey reported that 27 per cent of B.C. youth aged 15-24 used cannabis at least once the previous year. Meanwhile, the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey showed high schoolers' cannabis use doubled to more than 20 per cent in 2009 from less than 10 per cent in 1991.

The coalition also released a survey Wednesday showing a majority of British Columbians believe alcohol is more harmful than cannabis.

According to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, federal anti-drug expenditures saw a 600 per cent increase to more than $18 billion in 2002 from $1.5 billion in 1981. But during the same period, cannabis potency increased by 145 per cent and its price decreased by 58 per cent.

"By every metric this policy has been a failure," Wood said, adding the Health Officers' Council of B.C. has endorsed the coalition's call for ending marijuana prohibition.

"Having every medical health officer from every region in B.C. agreeing that taxation and regulation under a public-health framework is the way forward really puts the pressure on politicians to justify the maintenance of the status quo," he added. PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS

More coverage {page 4}

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Church leaders step down as shelter loses funding

First United Church ministers resign over decision to close Downtown Eastside shelter
Despite the protest, city councillor says other housing options will be available

DANIEL PALMER
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

JEFF HODSON/METRO FILE

▶ Rev. Sandra Severs and Rev. Ric Matthews at the announcement of a $31-million redevelopment of First United Church in April 2010.

A 240-person "last-resort" shelter operating out of a Downtown Eastside church is permanently closing and looking for new management after being criticized amid safety concerns.

First United Church Mission has provided a low-barrier shelter for the past four years as part of its outreach program at 320 East Hastings St.

Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery — the church's oversight committee — said they felt compelled to close the shelter after pressure to conform to operational standards from BC Housing and the City of Vancouver.

"The plan is to phase out the shelter over the next three months," said chairperson Dal McCrindle. "The rest of the programs that First United maintains will continue to operate well into the future."

In response to the decision, executive minister Rev. Ric Matthews resigned along with two members of his staff — Rev. Sandra Severs, deputy executive minister and Gillian Rhodes, director of operations — citing a difference of opinion from the church's oversight board on the best use of the property.

Kerry Jang, a Vancouver city councillor, said other buildings will open up to handle the misplaced homeless in the short-term but the city remains committed to developing its 14 single-resident-occupancy (SRO) sites.

"There will always be a need for some shelter in the city of Vancouver, but what we're doing is matching need to permanent housing."

The difficulties arose, said Jang, when the church began ignoring occupancy levels and operating as a sanctuary rather than as a shelter for the homeless.

> **"We have to be able to be in a relationship with them to be able to help them."**
> REV. RIC MATTHEWS

"The safety of anybody using a facility is paramount," said Jang, defending the city's strict enforcement of the fire code.

Matthews said he believes the church has a responsibility to house anyone in need and believes the intense governmental scrutiny began after several sexual assaults were reported at the shelter.

Although he is sad to leave, Matthews and his colleagues now hope to engage Vancouver Coastal Health to create viable housing options for the "most troubled and troublesome" in the community, a demographic that Matthews believes is poorly serviced.

"We're not looking to provide a facility where these people nest and stay for the rest of their lives," Matthews said.

"Barring people from the Downtown Eastside ... simply severs them from any relationships that they have, and I don't see how that helps them, society or the taxpayer."

VPD warns public of high-risk sex offender

A high-risk sex offender will be living in Vancouver, police warned Wednesday.

James Allan Pike, 39, is five-foot-eight and 170 pounds, with brown hair and blue eyes.

He is required to report all relationships with women to his parole officer. He is also ordered not to consume, purchase or possess alcohol or drugs.

▶ Pike

METRO

Cop cars hit by sleepy driver

A Prince George man is in custody after allegedly stealing a car, falling asleep at the wheel and ramming into several police cars upon being approached.

The man is now facing 16 charges, including assaulting a police officer and flight from police.

METRO

Simon Fraser prof nets education award

A Simon Fraser University professor has received an international award for his creative approach.

Prof. Kieran Egan, who teaches educational theory, was one of 10 recipients of the Upton Sinclair award, which honours academics for their contribution to the advancement of education.

Egan was internationally recognized for his 2008 book, The Future of Education: Reimagining our Schools from the Ground Up, and is well known for his theory of encouraging learning through imagination rather than memorization.

METRO

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City savours food-cart suggestions

Have your say about tasty truck food at vancouver.ideascale.com

STEPHANIE ORFORD
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

The City of Vancouver is asking Vancouverites to help spice up its food-cart selection.

Another 15 food trucks will hit Vancouver streets next summer, and the city wants people to throw their ideas into the pot, said Coun. Heather Deal.

Vancouverites are already commenting in full force on the city's comment website, dishing on the foods they crave most.

After the comment site closes at midnight on Jan. 22, the city will pick three of the public commenters to be part of a panel of food-cart taste-testers.

"We wanted to make sure there was a chance for people to have their opinions heard officially," Deal said.

The first round of food trucks that hit the streets in 2010 were chosen by a lottery, but the process has become more selective since the food-cart program began. A random draw proved insufficient for choosing from the variety of food carts that rushed to apply, Deal explained.

She doesn't like to pick favourites but named a few of the popular food carts, including Re-Up BBQ, Roaming Dragon, Cartel Taco and Coma Food Truck.

Deal sees a great future for food carts in Vancouver.

"We're going to try to get them out of the downtown core," she said, adding that the city is now consulting with community associations to find locations for food trucks in every neighbourhood.

STEPHANIE ORFORD/METRO

▶ Yong Sook Lee sells in-house cut Korean beef rib burgers and tacos at her food cart Ursu on Wednesday.

British Columbians take the high road

The majority of British Columbians believe alcohol is more dangerous than marijuana, a new Angus Reid poll suggests.

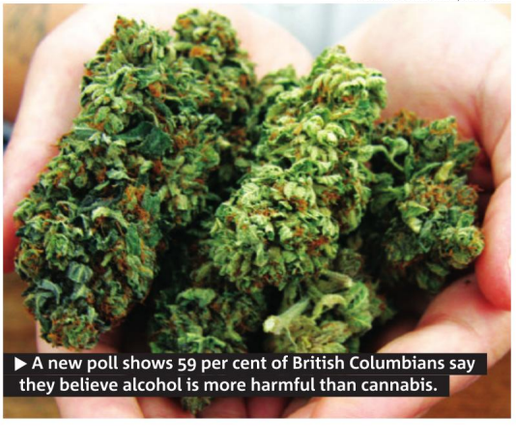
In an online survey among 800 British Columbian adults, 59 per cent of respondents disagreed that regular marijuana use is more harmful than regular alcohol use.

The poll also found that 54 per cent of B.C. residents do not agree that marijuana is a "gateway" drug that can lead to the use of other dangerous drugs such as heroin.

Jodie Emery, wife of pot activist Marc Emery, said this new information proves that public support for legalization is growing and reinforces the need to end the current marijuana laws.

The survey commissioned by Stop the Violence B.C. — a coalition made up of academic, legal, law enforcement and health experts trying to legalize marijuana — was conducted from Sept. 7 to 9, 2011.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO FILE



▶ A new poll shows 59 per cent of British Columbians say they believe alcohol is more harmful than cannabis.

"The science and the evidence are all there," Emery said. "You can't deny the truth, and the truth is backed up by evidence and proof. That's something that the prohibitionists don't have."

"There's a lot more movement made on this issue and progress being made in the world, and it's the Canadian government that has an embarrassing backwards model."

She said she doesn't think Prime Minister Stephen Harper would change his mind regarding the anti-marijuana law, despite numerous reports and experts saying that marijuana prohibition is a failed policy.

"We're going to have to change the government," Emery added.

"Over time, everybody is going to be able to agree that the best way to deal with marijuana and drugs is to control and regulate them for safety and make sure that criminals aren't the ones controlling it."

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS

Icy Coquihalla road remains open

Icy conditions have made a mess of the Coquihalla Highway, with several vehicles spinning off the road or crashing into others.

The RCMP have sent in extra officers to deal with the situation, and so far no major injuries have been reported and the road remains open. Bob Gilowski of VSA Highway Maintenance says people are driving too fast for the conditions.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cop follows nose to grow-op

Police literally caught wind of a marijuana grow operation near Trail during a traffic check.

The distinct odour of marijuana led an officer to follow his nose to a property, which had formerly operated as a sawmill.

Police obtained a warrant and executed a search on Dec. 10, where they seized 455 plants.

Two men in their 30s were arrested on site and now face drug-related charges.

TRAIL DAILY TIMES/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Blockade at Gitxsan office continues

Demonstrators continue to blockade the office of a First Nation in Northwest B.C., in spite of a Supreme Court ruling ordering the group to vacate.

The protesters are angry a hereditary chief for the Gitxsan signed an agreement with Enbridge over its proposed Northern Gateway pipeline. But the Gitxsan Treaty Society says the chief wasn't authorized to sign on its behalf.

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Crash puts ferry terminal on shelf

The Duke Point ferry terminal near Nanaimo will be shut down for months after a ferry crashed into the dock, BC Ferries said Wednesday.

The BC Ferries vessel Coastal Inspiration — with a capacity of more than 1,600 passengers and crew and 370 vehicles, including 32 semi-tractor-trailer units — slammed into a loading ramp on Tuesday, injuring two people and heavily damaging the only ramp.

"It's going to be months before that berth is repaired," company spokeswoman Deborah Marshall said.

The 160-metre Coastal Inspiration is expected to be out of service for at least a month, she said. A new part has to be made in Germany, where the ship was built.

Marshall said there was a warning to passengers to brace just before the impact.

"There were two injuries reported, two soft-tissue injuries — one to a crew member and one to a passenger," she said. "There has been significant damage."

She says a preliminary investigation shows an electronic failure in a control system may have caused the crash, but that hasn't been verified.

There were four daily round-trip runs between Duke Point and Tsawwassen near Vancouver, but those trips will now sail out of Departure Bay.

The crash comes at the busiest time of the year, with people travelling to and from Vancouver Island for the Christmas holidays.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FALSE ECONOMY

Shutting clinics will cost more in the end: Nurses

Shutting down five sex-health clinics in the southern Interior will end up costing the health-care system more in the long run, the B.C. Nurses Union says.

The clinics in Kelowna, Kamloops, Penticton, Grand Forks and Cranbrook offer tests for sexually transmitted diseases, but the Interior Health Authority says they aren't used much.

Union president Debra McPherson says the alternatives, including family doctors, are inadequate and not as cost-effective as the clinics. The union, which represents staff at the clinics, says many people don't have a family doctor, and the clinics provide tests and treatment at a fraction of the cost of having them done by a doctor.

Clinic staff also counsel people with sexually transmitted diseases, provide vaccinations for high-risk cases and help guide clients toward safer sex practices, the union says.

McPherson says the clinics should be considered an essential public service and she's written Health Minister Mike de Jong, urging him to reverse the closures.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Finding cancer mutation a giant leap: B.C. scientist

Discovery means that one treatment could be developed for several cancers Hailed as a fundamental shift in understanding of the disease

CONTRIBUTED/B.C. CANCER FOUNDATION

Dr. David Huntsman, director of the ovarian cancer research program of B.C., says the discovery of the mutant DICER1 gene is "rewriting the book of what cancer is."

STEPHANIE ORFORD
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Cancer research took a leap forward on Wednesday thanks to B.C. scientists who have discovered a crucial new cancer mutation.

Researchers at the B.C. Cancer Agency and the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute found that a series of seemingly unrelated tumours all contained the same mutation — in a gene called DICER1. The discovery suggests that treatments that target the mutation might be effective in treating several seemingly unrelated cancers.

The DICER1 gene is present in everyone, and normally conducts a "huge array" of other genes in our cells. But with the mutant DICER1, "all havoc breaks loose," said David Huntsman, genetic pathologist and director of the ovarian cancer program at the institute. Huntsman led the team alongside Gregg Morin, a lead scientist from the Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre at the B.C. Cancer Agency.

Until now, most cancer treatments have been designed to target specific types of cancer, but the scientists found the DICER1 mutation in certain ovarian, muscle, testicular and uterine cancers, suggesting that those cancers might respond to a single treatment "across a range of cancers that no one ever thought of treating together," Huntsman said.

A single treatment that hits many cancers could save time, resources and lives.

"In B.C. we're really rewriting the book of what cancer is," Huntsman said, adding that the discovery demonstrates the value of multidisciplinary research.

The researchers' next steps are to discover what the mutation is doing at the cellular level and how the DICER1 mutation affects the different tumour types and their responses to treatment, Huntsman said.

"It's a thrilling time to be part of something where we realize that when people look back they'll say our understanding of cancer shifted fundamentally around now," Huntsman said. "And B.C. patients would be the first people to benefit from the discoveries."

Huntsman and his team published a paper on the discovery in the New England Journal of Medicine, released on Wednesday.

Teen convicted of arson wanted to 'help' store

An Osoyoos teenager has been sentenced to four years behind bars for setting a fire that caused $500,000 damage in his southern Okanagan town.

Phoenix Lonsdale, 18, pleaded guilty to the May 1, 2011, arson that was sparked in a pile of clothes in a thrift store.

Flames destroyed the thrift store as well as a neighbouring dollar store, while heavy smoke and water damaged a nearby bank and dental clinic.

Lonsdale testified he thought the fire would help the financially strapped owners of the thrift store and didn't realize the property was not insured.

Crown counsel requested a six- to eight-year prison term.

A provincial court judge in Penticton imposed the 48-month sentence, in addition to the eight months Lonsdale has already spent in custody.

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Clowns spread joy and good cheer

Sing Christmas carols at home for adults with severe disabilities

KENDRA WONG
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Residents at the George Pearson Centre received a special surprise as clowns roamed the halls singing carols and spreading Christmas cheer.

Three clown "doctors" from the Jest for Joy foundation visited approximately 60 patients, and staff on Tuesday, engaging in banter and physical theatre in the third annual "Christmas Clown Carolling" day.

"It's to promote joy and inspiration in a facility where there's often a lot of loneliness, boredom and depression," said Allyson Grant, artistic director and founder of Jest for Joy.

"It's just bringing a smile to their face or a tender moment in a place where the focus is normally on their medical concerns."

Patients' reactions range from curiosity to outbursts of joy, said Grant.

"It's amazing the reactions sometimes from people. We have some patients that are not verbal that work so hard to say thank you."

Grant, Briana Rayner and Matthew Kowalchuk make up the clown trio, which performs every Tuesday at the George Pearson Centre in Vancouver. The centre is home to about 120 adults with severe disabilities.

"We know we're not going to do something life-changing for people, it's a moment of connection with their humanity," said Grant.

KENDRA WONG/FOR METRO

▶ Briana Rayner, also known as Dr. Badges, examines a patient at the George Pearson Centre on Tuesday.

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News in brief

Bid to resolve strike impasse

The B.C. Labour Relations Board (LRB) wants teachers and the B.C. Public School Employers Association to think creatively if the two sides hope to resolve a teachers' strike that is nearly five months old.

The LRB says current rules — which ban walkouts by teachers and set essential-service levels to include almost all their regular activities — offer no incentive to settle the current job action.

Contract talks are set to resume early next month and the employers' association hopes essential service levels can be rejigged in an effort to kick-start negotiations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Our finances stress us out

B.C. residents are stressed out about the state of their finances and the health of the economy.

That's the finding of a survey, commissioned by insurer Sun Life Financial.

It shows more than a third of Canadians — including more than half of young people and 31 per cent of B.C. residents — are more anxious about their finances this year than a year ago.

Sixteen per cent of British Columbians worry more about work and career than they did last year — and 20 per cent express growing fears about a sliding economy.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Retail sales grow: StatsCan

B.C. and the other Western provinces led the way as October's retail sales rose across the country for the third month in a row.

Statistics Canada says new car purchases drove Alberta to the head of the pack with a three per cent boost in retail sales in October, while sales in B.C. improved 1.7 per cent, just behind the 1.9 per cent posted in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fishermen fined for disturbing sea lions

Two Vancouver Island men received fines totalling $5,000 after pleading guilty at provincial court in Duncan to offences under the Fisheries Act that included disturbing Stellar sea lions.

On Aug. 23, 2010, a Parks Canada warden observed a fishing vessel chasing Stellar sea lions from their rocks by throwing objects at them.

Fishery officers identified the vessel in Port Renfrew, on Vancouver Island's west coast.

Nolan Walks pleaded guilty to disturbing the sea lions, exceeding the daily limit for halibut and obstructing a fishery officer. He was fined $2,000 for disturbing the Stellar sea lions and $500 for each of the other two counts. His co-accused, Campbell Eagles-McKinnon, pleaded guilty to exceeding the daily limit for halibut and obstructing a fishery officer. He was fined $2,000.

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Tory MP speaks out for rights of unborn

He deplores 'subhuman' status

A Conservative MP says Parliament should consider extending human rights to unborn children.

Stephen Woodworth's view is seen as an attempt to reopen the debate around abortion laws.

"Canadian law provides no human rights protection whatsoever for children before the moment of complete birth," Woodworth said yesterday.

"This means that in Canada a child is legally considered to be subhuman while his or her little toe remains in the birth canal, even if he or she is breathing."

The MP from Kitchener, Ont., doesn't explicitly mention the word abortion, but he gently suggests it is time to "examine" the question of granting human rights protections to unborn children.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PM's blockade

- Woodworth's views face a bleak future in Parliament.
- Prime Minister Stephen Harper vowed in the last election to stamp out any debate and defeat any private member's bills that might arise from members of his caucus on abortion.

Homecoming. Love sails in

▶ It's great to be home: Petty Officer 2nd Class Marissa Gaeta, left, kisses her girlfriend of two years, Petty Officer 3rd Class Citlalic Snell, on Wednesday. Gaeta's ship returned from 80 days at sea.

BRIAN J. CLARK/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

80-day voyage ends with a kiss

It is a time-honoured tradition at U.S. navy homecomings — one lucky sailor is chosen to be first off the ship for the long-awaited kiss with a loved one. Yesterday in Virginia Beach, Va., for what is believed to be the first time, the happily reunited couple was gay.

Topless activists accuse 'butchers' of abuse

They say they were made to undress in the woods in freezing temperatures, punched in the head and back, threatened with death and rape and smeared with paint.

A group of women from a Ukrainian topless-protest group yesterday recounted their ordeal at the hands of security officials in neighbouring Belarus.

Oksana Shechko said she and two fellow activists were first interrogated on a bus for 12 hours. Then the indignities began.

"It was a real fight for survival," Shechko said after returning to Kyiv.

"We ended up in the hands of the butchers who kill and terrify the Belarusian people."

Shechko, 24, said the activists were made to sit still on the bus for several hours, prevented from speaking or moving.

SERGEI CHUZAVKOV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Activists Aleksandra Nemchinova, left, Inna Shevchenko, centre, and Oksana Shechko tell their story in Kyiv yesterday.

"If we moved our heads or hands, they beat us," Shechko said.

They were left half-naked in a forest, where they eventually found help from area residents.

Shechko claimed they were punished for a protest in Minsk in which they bared their breasts to bring attention to President Aleksander Lukashenko's crackdown on the opposition.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brutal rule

- Lukashenko has repressed opposition and media since becoming leader of Belarus, a former Soviet republic, in 1994.
- In December 2010 elections, he was declared winner, but protesters denounced alleged vote fraud.
- Police arrested around 700 people, some of whom remain in jail.

Prize car in a crash

A U.S. man who won a $380,000 Lamborghini in a contest crashed the sports car six hours after he got it.

The lime green Murcielago Roadster was on its way to a Las Vegas body shop yesterday for repairs.

David Dopp said he was taking friends and family on rides when the vehicle hit ice or loose gravel and started spinning. No one was injured.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prince's new challenge

Britain's Prince Harry, 27, says he'll be deployed to Afghanistan for a second time, a British news report said yesterday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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▶ Prince Harry

Let the bugs clean it

Researchers at the University of Calgary say they've made a major breakthrough in the effort to clean up oilsands development.

They say they've isolated a tiny living organism that eats the toxic sludge found in tailings ponds.

Tailings ponds have often been ground zero for environmentalists targeting what's called "dirty oil."

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Sears

Killer doc loses medical licence

Toronto surgeon involved in liposuction death gets 2-year suspension Also faces public rebuke, hefty fine

STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ Dr. Behnaz Yazdanfar leaves the Ontario College of Physicians in Toronto in this 2009 file photo.

A self-styled cosmetic surgeon who carried on doing a liposuction procedure even though a post-operative patient was dying in a room next door has lost her licence for two years, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario decided Wednesday.

"(Yazdanfar's) lack of knowledge and/or ability, and her faulty judgment ended in tragic consequences," Ontario's medical regulator said in its decision.

"She violated her professional responsibility by treating not just one but many patients in an unsafe manner."

Yazdanfar, a family doctor who moved exclusively into liposuction and breast augmentation in 2003, was found to have violated professional standards last May in regard to numerous patients.

In one case, Krista Stryland, 32, died after Yazdanfar removed more than six litres of fat from over 30 per cent of her body — well above the five-litre maximum standard — which was "frankly dangerous," college documents show.

219 **In addition, Dr. Behnaz Yazdanfar will have to face a public reprimand, and pay $219,000 in costs.**

When Stryland went into shock, Yazdanfar failed to respond properly, the college said. The owner and operator of the Toronto Cosmetic Clinic went to perform another procedure as Stryland lay dying in the recovery room.

"Standing by and failing to call 911 when appropriate in the Krista Stryland case demonstrated that she was not up to the task of caring for this critically ill patient," the college found.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DEADLY SILICONE

France may pay to remove exploding breast implants

Emmanuelle Maria's breasts were burning and globules of silicone gel were protruding into her armpits.

Her implants had exploded inside her. Yet her doctors, she says, told her nothing was wrong.

Now, she wants the French government to tell 30,000 women to get their implants removed — at the state's expense — to call attention to their risks and save others from potential pain and indignity.

Prompted by calls from implant wearers and leading doctors, French health authorities are considering a drastic and unprecedented move: recommending mass surgery to rid the country of a type of breast implant that investigators say was secretly made with cheap industrial silicone whose medical dangers remain unclear.

Governments around Europe are hanging on France's decision Friday.

Tens of thousands more women in Britain, Italy, Spain and other European nations are walking around with the same pre-filled implants, made by the now-defunct French company Poly Implant Prothese, or PIP.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO

▶ Israeli Tomer Majerowicz is escorted into Halifax provincial court by a Border Services agent yesterday. Majerowicz and seven other Israelis pleaded guilty to working illegally in Canada.

Illegal workers must pay $1,000

Eight Israelis pulled from Halifax home plead guilty

JENNIFER TAPLIN
@METRONEWS.CA
METRO CANADA IN HALIFAX

Eight Israeli citizens pleaded guilty yesterday to working illegally in Halifax.

Two more were to appear in Halifax provincial court Thursday morning.

Border Services agents, assisted by police, searched a home in the Halifax area early yesterday morning. Search warrants covering three area malls were also issued.

"They lied to me that it was legal work."
ACCUSED ISRAELI PAZ KFIR, 21, SPEAKING TO THE COURT

The Israelis were said to be working at kiosks selling gel heating pads to Christmas shoppers.

Border agents escorted a number of people in handcuffs out of the Halifax home throughout the day. A few neighbours said they weren't surprised.

"I've been suspicious of that house for a while," said one neighbour.

Albert Price, manager of the criminal investigations division for Canada Border Services Agency, said eight men and two women were arrested for working without authorization or employing foreign nationals.

One woman, Paz Kfir, 21, told court she was offered what she thought at first was legal work.

Kfir, like the seven others who appeared in court yesterday, pleaded guilty and were handed $1,000 fines — which they need to pay by Jan. 27.

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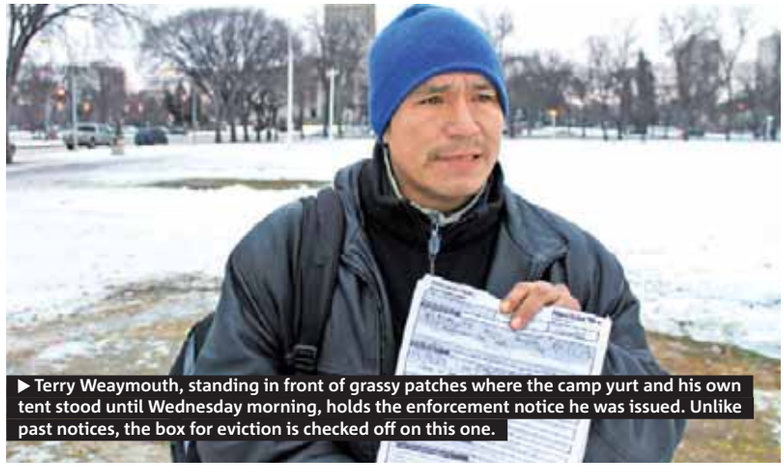
Sears

Police tear down Occupy Winnipeg camp

- Protesters had occupied downtown park since Oct. 15
- Throughout winter, camp of 30 dwindled to three

SEAN LEDWICH/METRO WINNIPEG



▶ Terry Weaymouth, standing in front of grassy patches where the camp yurt and his own tent stood until Wednesday morning, holds the enforcement notice he was issued. Unlike past notices, the box for eviction is checked off on this one.

SEAN LEDWICH
OTTAWA@METRONEWS.CA
METRO CANADA IN WINNIPEG

"I'm disappointed at how disrespectful the police force was. They tore all the tarps. They just ripped it down and took all our stuff. They ripped all the tarps on the yurt, and that all belongs to the Twelve Tribes (community). And they ... (just) destroyed it."
KRISTAPS BALODIS, OCCUPIER

About 30 natural-resource officers and city police officers swooped into the Occupy Winnipeg encampment at Memorial Park at 7 a.m. Wednesday to enforce a provincial removal order issued last week.

Police briefly detained three occupiers at the camp while NROs dismantled and loaded a yurt (a small tent-like structure), two tents and all contents onto a trailer. Occupiers were told they could claim their belongings after they were catalogued.

"They sent 30 guys to take care of three peaceful protesters," said Kristaps Balodis, who had been sleeping in the yurt.

"This isn't the end.... This isn't the last you'll see of the camp. That I can say for sure."

Of the three evicted occupiers, Terry Weaymouth was the only one to get a written notice of eviction.

"Occupy Winnipeg is pretty much done, in my opinion, unless we take immediate action to set up somewhere else," Weaymouth told Metro Winnipeg as he surveyed the empty park.

"Personally I'd like to see (a tent) go up tonight, even if it's just one tent, just to defy these f—ers."

Weaymouth said Manitoba Conservation district supervisor Joe Johannesson told him a hay bale fire last week was the final straw for the province.

"He said, 'Well, it's because of the last fire.... Safety is being threatened, so (we've) got to do this.' That's just an excuse."

In a written statement on Monday regarding the previous week's removal orders, the province said, "As with past orders, structures that are occupied will be allowed to remain."

In the afternoon Conservation minister Dave Chomiak told media the province decided to remove the camp when they received a report from the fire commissioner on Tuesday calling the camp unsafe.

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News in brief

New project good news for Armtec

CONTRACT. Armtec Infrastructure Inc. says it has been awarded a $32-million contract to make precast components for an aluminum-smelter project owned by Rio Tinto Alcan in B.C. Armtec, based in Guelph, Ont., says manufacturing of the components for the Kitimat Modernization Project is expected to be completed over two years, starting in 2012. This is good news for Armtec, which has been dealing with financial issues. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Norway gives hand to partners

DEBT. Norway says it will provide $9.3 billion US to the International Monetary Fund to help heavily indebted nations avoid default. Norway is not part of the European Union and its economy is cushioned by income from its oil and gas exports. Still, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg noted that it's in Norway's interest to help European trading parties. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Toyota strives for a comeback

CAR SALES. Toyota is aiming for a comeback, targeting global sales of 8.48 million vehicles in 2012 and an even bigger number in 2013, after being battered this year by the March disaster in Japan and flooding in Thailand. Toyota's global vehicle sales for this year total 7.9 million vehicles, including group companies, down six per cent from the previous year. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Proposed takeovers of RIM dismissed

- Industry analysts grappling over the future of the BlackBerry maker
- Shares up 10 per cent with proposal from Amazon, RIM refuses offer

With more takeover rumours roiling around Research In Motion and lifting its stock price, analysts said Wednesday there's little chance the struggling BlackBerry maker will be acquired in the near future.

"I think from the board's perspective, which tends to be friendly to the co-CEOs, they will want to give them a chance because six months ago this was a $50 stock," William Blair & Co. analyst Anil Doradla said.

Reuters reported Tuesday that Internet retailer Amazon.com recently approached RIM to discuss a takeover, but the Canadian company rejected the move. In the past, Microsoft and Nokia also dabbled in potential offers, but they were also rebuffed by RIM. Samsung, a growing player in the smartphone market, also has been named as a potential suitor.

$265M RIM's quarterly profits plunged to US$265 million, a drop from $911 million in the same three-month period last year.

"We continue to view near-term mergers and acquisitions for RIM as very unlikely given the company's dismal performance and uncertain outlook," said National Bank Financial analyst Kris Thompson.

RIM has disappointed investors recently with the delay of its next generation of BlackBerry smartphones until late 2012 and disappointing financial results.

BMO Capital Markets analyst Tim Long said an acquisition is unlikely due to RIM's business model.

RIM makes the operating system and puts it into its own handset, delivering a complete product. It's also a service provider to its corporate customers with secure, encrypted email.

"RIM is the only hybrid equipment manufacturer and service provider," Long wrote in a note.

Shareholder Vic Alboini said RIM will either be acquired as is, or broken up and sold. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. WEDNESDAY

TSX	Dollar
+ 36.65 (11,753.53)	+ 0.42¢ (97.48¢ US)
OIL	**Natural gas**
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	Gold
	$1,613.60 US (- $4.00 US)

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PAUL SAKUMA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

▶ A customer looks at a BlackBerry Torch at a Best Buy in Mountain View, Calif.

EU airline carbon charge gets go-ahead

MARKUS SCHREIBER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

▶ An airplane takes off at Berlin's Tegel airport during snowy and stormy weather last January.

U.S. airlines failed Wednesday to block an EU law charging airlines flying to Europe for their carbon pollution. The decision by an EU court was widely hailed by environmentalists but the Fitch ratings agency said it raised the spectre of a global trade dispute.

The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg dismissed arguments that imposing the European Union's cap-and-trade carbon-credits program on flights to and from European airports infringes on national sovereignty or violates international aviation treaties. U.S. and other non-European airlines had sued the EU, arguing that they were exempt from the law.

Environmentalists called the law a first step in controlling carbon emissions in a key economic sector. But Fitch Ratings said the decision could deepen rather than quell the dispute, raised in a lawsuit brought by U.S. and Canadian airlines acting through the industry trade organization Airlines for America.

The U.S. airlines said the regulation was tantamount to "an exorbitant tax," but the EU said the added costs would amount to a few dollars per ticket. Fitch added that retaliation could come in the form of slot allocations at airports and authorizing routes. The program is due to go into effect Jan. 1. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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JOHN MAZEROLLE
METRO

I'm not much for Christmas carols.

I enjoy the joking songs, like Santa Baby or The Christmas Shoes, but otherwise the only holiday tune I like is the creepy Carol of the Bells, which brings to mind the warm holiday image of Santa Claus being stabbed repeatedly with a candy cane.

So, in a bid to make myself a better, more Christmassy person, I decided this week to open myself up to some holiday "classics" for the first time in years. And let me say that, upon further review, Christmas songs are bonkers.

There's We Wish You a Merry Christmas, with its special yuletide message of "Bring us some figgy pudding or we will tear you limb from limb."

There's Winter Wonderland, the story of a man planning a fun day that includes building a snowman, pretending it's a priest and talking to it about his marital future. I'm thinking his belle doesn't know this plan yet and that, if she did, she'd have to "hurry on her way," Frosty-style.

"Also, there's the full version of Jingle Bells, which includes a little-sung verse where a man in a one-horse open sleigh laughs at another man who has fallen and is sprawling in the snow."

Also, there's the full version of Jingle Bells, which includes a little-sung verse where a man in a one-horse open sleigh laughs at another man who has fallen and is sprawling in the snow. He leaves him there, possibly for dead. I must say it rather improves the song.

The hands-down winner, though, of Craziest Christmas Carol is Do You Hear What I Hear? I assume it was written when absinthe still had kick.

It starts with the wind asking a lamb if it sees a dancing star. In most songs, that would be excitement enough. But there's more: The lamb asks his shepherd, with whom he has a good working relationship, if he hears singing.

You would think the shepherd would then realize he's been putting in too many 12-hour days and should really take that Dead Sea stroll he's been saving for. But instead he runs to the mighty king, who apparently has no security at his mighty castle, and tells the monarch the joyous news: "I found a talking lamb!"

No — of course, he tells him that a child is shivering in the cold. With no women around, the king and shepherd's best plan for getting the baby warm is to bring it silver and gold.

Between the talking animal and the potential case of child neglect, this song is one hell of a wild ride.

So, I'll admit, Christmas carols are more fun than I remembered. They should be sung far and wide by you and your family and your lamb, if you have one.

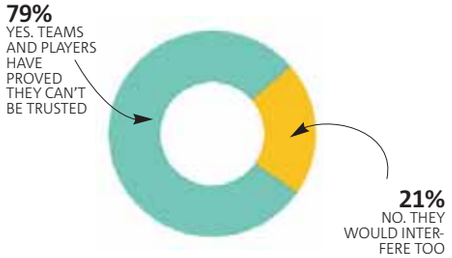
And though it's been said, many times, many ways: Bring me my figgy pudding.

Or else.

Read more of John Mazerolle's columns at metronews.ca/hesays

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Should independent doctors monitor concussions in pro sports?



Local tweets

- **@BIGMURPH56:** Well I'm in trouble... Just bought the kids an electric guitar, drum set, and keyboard.... Im just trying to keep the kids off the gridiron
- **@gracecheung604:** Christmas isn't even here yet and I'm planning my NYE dinner...getting takeout from some favourite places! Can't wait!
- **@karlalzner:** caps fans I need some help tweeting @michaelbuble C if he will come to dc for a game. That's an official invite from 1 burnaby boy 2 another
- **@CoryMonteith:** beautiful day in Vancouver! so good to be home :)
- **@VanRealDeal:** Want to help choose Van's next food carts? Go to tinyurl.com/77c5uhq and give us your great ideas! #vanpoli
- **@bruce_arthur:** Seems like THAT should be in Vancouver. RT @ldeswiage @bruce_arthur @rcamcole Just outside of #ThunderBay there's a rural postal code P0T2G0

BRENDON THORNE/GETTY IMAGES

Daily Zoom

Christmas comes early

Taking treats from a tiger

Sumatran tiger cubs tore apart a wrapped Christmas present at Taronga Zoo on Wednesday in Sydney. Animals received Christmas-themed enrichment foods as part of the zoo's regular program to encourage the animals to forage for food and help improve hunting abilities.

GETTY IMAGES

Quite the yuletide feast

Barry the Tasmanian devil got a bowl of kangaroo blood with offal and bones while freshly made popcorn was served to the gorillas, who are kept on a low-fat diet. The zoo's seals got blue swimmer crabs and fish snacks delivered in ice from the Sydney Fish Markets, the CBC reported. METRO

BRENDON THORNE/GETTY IMAGES

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Spirit of the season

Light up your holidays Or just distract your kids with all Vancouver's bright distractions

BACKSTAGE PASS

GRAEME MCRANOR
METRO VANCOUVER

'Twas a few days before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a –

"Don't put that in your mouth. Do not put that in your mouth! Don't make me come over there! You do not want to make me put down these bite-sized sausage rolls and come over there!"

Oh, hello. I didn't hear you come in. My son was just snacking on some Christmas ornaments. Aren't kids cute? Excuse me one second.

"Don't you dare give the cat eggnog! Listen to me very carefully, mister. That's daddy's special eggnog. Why is the cat wrapped in tinsel? I am this close to calling Santa right now. This close!"

If you're like me, you love the spirit of the holidays. And who better to share it with than your kids, who are home from school. All day. For many, many days in a row.

Here are a few bright ideas to keep them occupied while they're on vacation. For many, many, many consecutive days. Did I say that already?

VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDENS

▶ The Festival of Lights at VanDusen Botanical Gardens.

14th annual Bright Lights in Stanley Park (until Jan. 2; closed Christmas Day)

Kids love lights. Kids love trains. Combine the two in Stanley Park and you've got a magical ride through a forest complete with hot chocolate, fresh popcorn and roasted chestnuts. Sunday to Thursday, 3 to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 3 to 11 p.m. Admission to plaza by donation to the British Columbia Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund. Heard tickets for the train are scarce — visit Ticketmaster.ca for more info.

Festival of Lights at VanDusen Botanical Gardens (until Jan. 2; closed Christmas Day)

The crowd favourite has to be the Dancing Lights on Livingstone Lake. They start at 4:30 p.m. with two different shows: one on the half hour and a completely different one on the hour. Encourage your kids to dance very hard at both. Nap ensues. VandusenGarden.org.

Canyon Lights (Until Jan. 1; closed Christmas Day):

You've probably gotten wise to the fact my son loves lights. At Capilano, they've got about 250,000 of them scattered throughout the park.

Add a suspension bridge, the Treetops Adventure and a lighted Cliffwalk and you've got a recipe for a couple of hours of entertainment. Check out CapBridge.com.

Have a great holiday season everyone and a happy New Year.

2 scene

Split

Jessica Lange and Sam Shepard have separated after nearly 30 years together. A publicist for Lange confirmed the split Monday. People magazine first reported the separation, saying the actors concluded their relationship almost two years ago.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CBS has year's biggest margin of victory in prime time ratings

Dancing days for Crowe

Writer-director returns with same enthusiasm, new stable of characters

CHARLES SYKES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fresh off an inspired writing session, Cameron Crowe is pulsing with enthusiasm.

He spent the previous night sitting outside New York's Plaza Hotel, a spot that made him recall one of his first trips to New York — as a teenage journalist for Rolling Stone — in which he stayed at the Plaza while chronicling a Led Zeppelin tour.

"I was just thinking, 'Man, it's like no time has passed,' says Crowe. "This is the future time. That's what it was. You always wonder, 'In the future time, what will this all mean? What will it all amount to?' That was kind of the revelation of last night: Here I am. And it feels like no time."

After six years of uncertainty, the present is feeling good for Crowe, the writer-director of earnest, personal films such as Say Anything... and Jerry Maguire.

He's back with his first feature film since 2005's critical and box-office misfire Elizabethtown: We Bought a Zoo, an unabashedly warmhearted family film about a father (Matt Damon) who, after his wife dies of cancer, impulsively buys a rundown zoo to re-energize himself and his two kids.

"I don't look at the time post-Elizabethtown as the bottom of the roller coaster," says the perpetually writing Crowe. "I kind of look at it as a gathering time."

In those years, Crowe plotted a film about Marvin Gaye that failed to get off the ground (he hopes to still make it), scripted an adaptation of David Sheff's

"My dream was always to be able to be like a guy like Spike Lee or Woody Allen or Truffaut where one day you can look at all the stuff and they all come together to give you a portrait of a human life, in different stages of it."
CAMERON CROWE

Beautiful Boy and Tweak (a pair of books about an addict father and his son) and made two music documentaries (the Pearl Jam retrospective Pearl Jam Twenty and The Union, about Elton John's collaboration with Leon Russell).

He was also divorced from his wife of 24 years, Nancy Wilson of the band Heart, with whom he has 11-year-old twin sons.

Crowe says Wilson remains a "close collaborator" with the children, and that he eagerly voted for Heart in this year's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees.

The parallels with We Bought a Zoo — which includes moving scenes of Damon's character fondly reminiscing about his wife — aren't lost on Crowe.

"This movie is about keeping souvenirs of a lost love," says Crowe. "Even in the broken relationships or people that have died or moved on, there's valuable luggage to be kept that guides the future."

Crowe himself is a big collector. His largest collections might be his LPs and various music memorabilia, such as treasured set lists and ticket stubs. But he also keeps things from his movies. The boombox John Cusack raised over his head in Say Anything... sits in his garage.

His most cherished item is a signed Vans sneaker from Sean Penn, who played the Vans-wearing stoner Spicoli in Fast Times at Ridgemont High — Crowe's first script.

Though no masterpiece, We Bought a Zoo is considerably better than its title and plot synopsis suggest.

It's a rare film Crowe has directed but hasn't written (he shares screenplay credit with Aline Brosh McKenna, who adapted Benjamin Mee's autobiographical book), and it bears many hallmarks of the director.

Last week on The Daily Show, Damon, realizing the movie didn't sound like the most artistic enterprise, took to shouting at the crowd the simple justification: "Cameron Crowe directed it!"
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Battle of the Canuck crooners

▶ In this corner, hailing from Burnaby, B.C., Michael Bublé.

▶ And in this corner, hailing from Stratford, Ont., Justin Bieber.

It's a tale of the tape as Bieber and Bublé square off for Christmas dominance

Justin Bieber's holiday show may be the hottest ticket in Toronto this week, but few have better reasons for Christmas cheer this season than his compatriot Michael Bublé.

While Bieber performed a hotly anticipated acoustic Christmas show at Toronto's Massey Hall on Wednesday night, Bublé is fresh off a memorable performance on Saturday Night Live and his holiday disc has been one of the hottest items of the holiday shopping season. So, which Canadian crooner is flying higher at the moment? Perhaps a tale of the tape can help determine the victor.

AGE
Bublé is 36; Bieber is 17.

HOMETOWN
Bieber hails from Stratford, Ont., while Bublé grew up in Burnaby, B.C.

MOST MANTEL METAL
Considering that Bieber's brand of featherlight teen-pop typically elicits sneering from some critics, his awards tally has been impressive: two Juno Awards and a pair of Grammy nominations. Respectable, to be sure, but no match for Bublé, whose distinctive retro charm has helped him haul home 10 Junos and three Grammys.
Advantage: Bublé

FAMOUS FRIENDS
Bublé has a longstanding partnership with well-connected Canadian hitmaker David Foster, he reeled in Shania Twain for a White Christmas duet and he starred in a splashy holiday special that featured a bevy of well-known guests, none bigger than ... well, Justin Bieber. Bieber, meanwhile, has collaborated with Usher, Kanye West, Mariah Carey, Miley Cyrus, Chris Brown, Rascal Flatts, Ludacris and Boyz II Men.
Advantage: Bieber

TABLOID TRAUMA
Bieber's squeaky-clean image was tainted slightly this year when the singer was slapped with a paternity suit — allegations his team has vigorously denied — while he and girlfriend Selena Gomez were shadowed everywhere they went by prying paparazzi.

The newlywed Bublé and wife Luisana Lopilato seem to be afforded slightly more privacy.
Advantage: Bublé

SILVER-SCREEN DREAMS
Bublé has mused in interviews about an eventual transition to acting, and he won laughs with a recent cameo on Saturday Night Live (one which coincidentally poked fun at Bieber).

But his IMDB credits are limited to pre-fame performances in little-known stinkers (2001's Totally Blonde, anyone?).

Bieber's two-episode arc as a troubled teen on CSI didn't exactly elicit Emmy attention, but it was a bona fide role on a popular show, and his concert film Never Say Never earned more than $70 million in North America.
Advantage: Bieber

SOCIAL MEDIA
SAVVY
This one's a landslide.

Bieber has nearly 15.6-million followers on Twitter, an army of devoted fans who hang on his every lower-case missive as if their lives depend on it. Bublé has roughly 600,000 followers but doesn't issue the tweets himself — the reliably irreverent singer told The Canadian Press recently that he had to stay away from the platform because "(he would) get in huge trouble within days."
Advantage: Bieber

DECEMBER DOMINANCE
While Bieber's Under the Mistletoe has sold briskly — reaching platinum certification three times in Canada — Bublé has this year achieved a level of holiday ubiquity usually reserved for festive drinks, goofy sweaters and tense family dinners. Bublé's album, Christmas, has been certified platinum seven times over in Canada and, according to Billboard, it's on pace to become the second best-selling record of the year in the U.S., behind only Adele's 21.
Advantage: Bublé

BEST HAIR
Sorry, Mike.
Advantage: Bieber

THE WINNER:
Two Canadians doing extraordinarily well for themselves with fanbases that barely overlap?
Let's call this a tie.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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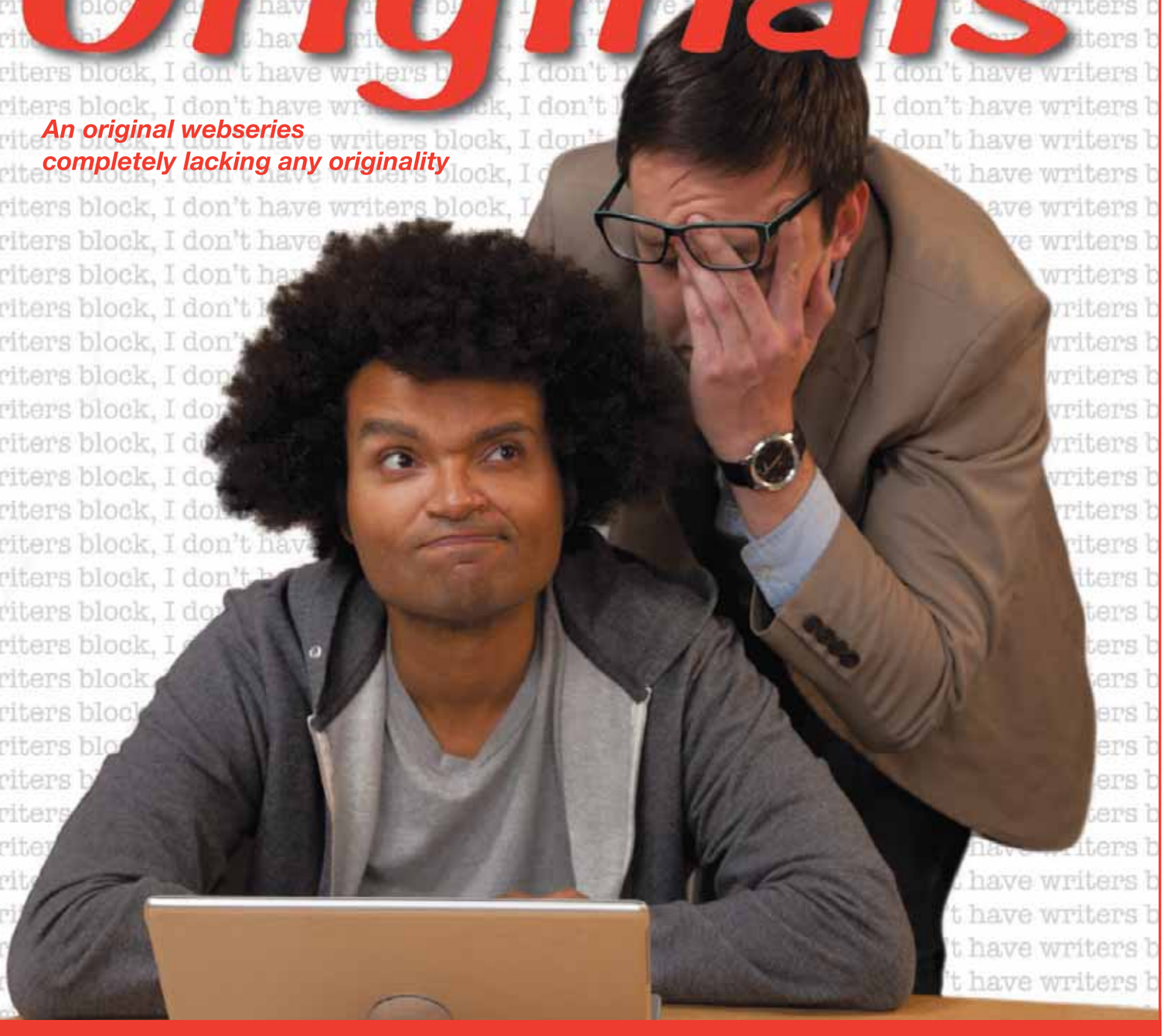

In today's episodes...

The Originals webseries draws to a close today with episodes 8 and 9. Will the guys finally come up with an original TV show idea for their big pitch meeting? Will Jason win Carina? Will Marsha win Jason? Will Trish really help Bryce? Will there be a wrap party? Find out the answers to these and other intriguing questions. Watch the concluding episodes today.

Watch at www.facebook.com/OriginalsTheSeries

Hathaway in no New York hurry to tie the knot

Anne Hathaway is ready to marry fiancé Adam Shulman — but apparently not as ready as the New York Post would like.

The newspaper reported earlier this week that the couple had set an October 2012 wedding date and had even sent out save-the-date cards to guests on the list for a lavish, New York-area ceremony.

However Hathaway's rep insists that there is no date and no cards have been sent out, according to a report from E! News.

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ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

▶ Anne Hathaway

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Did Jones get the 'X'?

There are rumours The X-Factor host Steve Jones won't be back next season Jones' rep denies the claims

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Steve Jones reportedly will not return as host the U.S. edition of The X-Factor after one season on the job, according to Hollyscoop.

"He got terrible reviews from critics when he started, and things haven't got better. There have been mistakes and he just doesn't seem to have the knack for dealing with contestants," a source says.

"The executives at Fox have already decided not to renew his contract and so, short of a miracle happening, it is pretty much a done deal that he will not take part next season."

However, Jones' rep told People magazine that the reports of his imminent dismissal were "a fabrication." "There have been absolutely no conversations about Steve Jones leaving The X Factor," the representative told the magazine.

It's sad that a rumoured firing is the only way to make people care about The X-Factor.

Timberlake off the market?

I take this with a huge grain of salt, but some people out there on the world wide web are reporting that Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel are engaged. (Remember: This is the same Internet that also said that Bon Jovi died earlier this week.) Lainey Gossip points to this Tweet from a gallery owner in Jackson, Wy.: "Word on the street is that Justin Timberlake proposed to Jessica Biel at the Amangani last night...we're picking out post-engagement presents for them just in case they come in! Trying to play it cool..."

Sounds like a huge publicity stunt from the gallery store owner but you never know.

▶ Steve Jones

More baby troubles for the Biebs

Justin Bieber may have thought taking a DNA test had gotten him clear of Mariah Yeater, the woman claiming Bieber is the father of her baby, but as far as Yeater is concerned nothing has been resolved.

"I dropped my lawsuit, but never my claim," Yeater tells the Chicago Sun-Times. "I still definitely want a DNA test and I want to refile my paternity case — I do believe he is the father."

METRO

In and out of fashion

The most unavoidable and most underrated fashion moments of 2011

WHO TAKES THE CROWN?

KENYA HUNT
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

Catherine Middleton, Kate Moss and Charlene Wittstock went head-to-head in the battle of the best-dressed brides. The couture creations all took to the catwalk-like church aisles to be picked apart. Here's what we learned for it all.

1 Long-sleeves are back, thanks to the Duchess of Cambridge. Just look at the new Twilight movie.

2 A pretty gown can't hide the fact that you can't stand the groom. We can barely remember how the Princess of Monaco's dress looked, but we'll never forget that eerie frozen smile on her face.

3 Never mind that the idea has been a staple of cheesetastic weddings for years, it's now perfectly OK to have 15 bridesmaids in your wedding — as long as they look like little pre-Raphaelite angels like the ones in Kate Moss'. You want to channel rock and roll royalty, rather than prom queens from hell a la the movie Bridesmaids.

4 Never, ever, five more evers, give your maid of honour a hotter dress than yours. We've all heard the horror stories about a rival woman stealing the bride's day. But your own sister? The Pippa Middleton Ass Appreciation Society is still going strong on Facebook. But have you seen any Kate Middleton Victorian Bustle Admiration Councils, hmmm?

5 Kate Moss is cooler than the real Royals. Mark Ronson, Naomi Campbell, Vivienne Westwood and Marc Jacobs were just a few of the people who attended her wedding.

GETTY IMAGES

Kate and Jamie are in love with a rock 'n' world.

GETTY IMAGES

Kate gets to grips with the Royal wave.

GETTY IMAGES

Here comes the reluctant bride.

The single most reason not to do drugs

Witness John Galliano's horrific video rants and spectacularly fast fall from grace climaxing with his dismissal from Christian Dior and his own eponymous line to boot.

The year's most coveted designery

The prize goes to Marc Jacobs, whose entire spring '12 ready-to- wear collection was stolen while in transit from Paris to London. Shortly afterwards, roughly $400,000 of Louis Vuitton goods, also Jacobs-designed, were nicked at an airport in Paris.

When overdressed became boring

One can only look at a sheer top and pasties so many times before it loses its shock value. Simply put, Lady Gaga's outlandish outfits simply don't look that outlandish anymore. And the same goes for Nicki Minaj, Katy Perry, Jessie J and pop music's other crazy ladies. We vote for a make-under.

THE YEAR'S MOST OVERRATED FASHION PLATES

THE KARDASHIANS

- Sky-high Louboutins, black stretch jeans and leopard print do not a fashion icon make.

JENNIFER LOPEZ

- She makes this list simply for inconsistency. Sometimes she nails it. Other times, such as her crystal-encrusted nude bodysuit on the American Music Awards, she fails miserably.

JESSICA SIMPSON

- Her clothing line is reportedly nearly worth a billion dollars. But we don't get it. Have you seen the way she dresses?

WILLOW SMITH

- This little tyke wears way too many garments all at once. Someone please fire one of her stylists.

3 life

Style pick

Keep your eyes on Beyoncé's little sis

Fashion blogs and magazines have rightfully acknowledged how amazing Solange Knowles has been looking lately. But it's time for the rest of the world to get in line. Her natural hair, artful print mixing and flair for boyish silhouettes strikes the perfect balance between classic and eccentrically cool.

MWN

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Solange looking fab

Michael Kors goes from runway to Wall Street after investors clamour for stock

Arch appeal: Achieve simple, spirited brows

THE KIT

By Janine Falcon

Bold brows wowed from the most recent runways, theatrically at Jean Paul Gaultier and Alexander Wang, and in a more wearable fashion from Jill Stuart and Prada.

Powders and pencils are brow-building staples, but fine-tip marker-like pens are on the rise, like the one Anastasia launched a few years back. Now available from Stila, Urban Decay and Gosh, they offer sheer, long-lasting shades that suit everyone from light blonde to dark brunette.

Fine-tipped tools:

• Magic Markers Stila All Day Waterproof Brow Color in Medium (also comes in Light). $27 each, stilacosmetics.com.

• Gosh Long Lasting Brow Pens, in Dark Brown, Wheat, Mahogany and Venetian Brown. $15 each, goshcosmetics.com.

• Urban Decay Urban Brow Precision Tip Brow Tint in Universal Blonde and Universal Brunette. $24 each, urbandecay.com

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Jeanne Space

In this hectic modern world, Twitter has become a cool and succinct way of communicating. It allows me to be accessible, instantly speak my mind, and connects me with all kinds of people. Whether it's a fashion question, or you just want to comment on life's bigger picture, I'd love to hear from you.

@Jeanne_Beker:
Now pre-taping 2 @CTVCanadaAM segments: 2011's top style mavens + fashion's top news stories. Who do YOU think rocked style this year?

- **@MsJoyce_xo:** so many choices but if they put Pippa Middleton on another best dressed list I am going to lose my mind. #idontseeit
- **@Jeanne_Beker:** I know... But hard to ignore. And better than some ol' movie star....
- **@WordfromSteph:** Kate Winslet. She's totally coming out of her shell. Her Cover shoot for British Glamour = fabulous!!
- **@Jeanne_Beker:** Agree!!!!
- **@escobar700:** for the man...Adam Levels/ Anderson Cooper. For the ladies, Lady Gaga, Sarah Jessica Parker, Victoria Beckham Tilda Swinton.
- **@Jeanne_Beker:** Cool choices!

▶ @Jeanne_Beker: Xmas shopping @TeatroVerdi with my mum. True Joy!

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H&M breathes fire into Dragon collection

SONY, COLUMBIA PICTURES, MERRICK MORTON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Rooney Mara as Lisbeth Salander

Stieg Larsson's enigmatic anti-heroine Lisbeth Salander, from the best-selling books and upcoming U.S. film remake The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, is an unlikely trendsetter.

From her multiple facial piercings and choppy, jet-black hair to her ripped tees and work boots held together with duct tape, Lisbeth's look is not only unconventional, but some might find it off-putting.

"We always wanted her clothes to sort of repel people and be a means of keeping people away," said actress Rooney Mara at the film's New York premiere Wednesday.

Yet huge Swedish retailer H&M saw an opportunity in sprucing up Lisbeth's style and making it safer for the masses.

The Dragon Tattoo Collection, created by costume designer Trish Summerville, features faux-leather coats, biker pants, shredded tees and dark denim miniskirts.

"There's different key pieces that I took out of her wardrobe that she wears in the film and we kind of changed the silhouette a little bit, changed the fabrication, cleaned the pieces up," explained Summerville in a recent interview.

The collection ranges from $3.95 for swirly, spiked earrings to $199 for a fitted black leather coat.

There also are studded belts, slouchy canvas bags and black boots distressed just enough to reveal a grey under layer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Double duty Christmas decor

When in a holiday pinch, use what you've got

DESIGN CENTRE

KARL LOHNES
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

For me, Christmas is all about setting a festive mood with holiday decor.

Although it would be nice to buy new holiday decor items each year, I find myself wanting to get creative with things from years past to create a more personal style to my space this year.

Here's a few ways to create interesting holiday focal points with things you might already have around the house.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ A wreath can go from door to table as a decorative focal point.

Use your wreath as a centrepiece

Last year's faux wreath or this year's fresh one hanging on the front door can easily take a horizontal position and become a festive centrepiece.

Place a few pillar candles, some holiday ornaments or a lonely poinsettia plant inside the wreath and you've got an impressive centrepiece for any table. Got an old plastic wreath? Spray paint it with a trendy colour like teal or citrus green for one last year of beauty.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ Funky holiday lights brighten up unused glass vases.

Display holiday lights in a tall vase

Fill various shaped glass vases with LED string lights and group together on a sofa table or in front of an used fireplace to create a modern holiday glow. Clear vases display multi-coloured lights best while white lights look great in coloured glass vases.

This idea also makes a safe night light in a guest room, hallway or foyer to guide guests throughout your space with having to turn on bright overhead lights at night.

Simple tricks

Large glass Mason jars make great hurricane lanterns to hold pillar candles. Frost the outsides with spray snow for a wintery look.

- **Decorative wrapping papers** make festive disposable table runners or placemats, and holiday ribbons make great napkin rings.
- **Birch fire logs** can get glamourous with a quick spray of metallic gold or silver paint and stacked beside the fireplace.

A LESSON IN STAIN CONTROL

CHARLES THE BUTLER

ASKCHARLESTHEBUTLER@METRONEWS.CA

FOR MORE, VISIT CHARLESMACPHERSON.COM

ISTOCK

▶ For precise stain removal, try using a Q-Tip.

Hi Charles,
I bought a beautiful pink leather jacket and somehow got a couple of ballpoint pen marks on it about an inch or two long. Do you know of any method to remove these marks?

I've done some research on this and you do have a difficult problem on your hands. I have two suggestions for you. But before you do anything, remember to please first check the suggested solution on an area that is not visible to ensure you do not damage the leather. I have two options for you to try:

1. Rub the ink mark with a soft cloth dampened with milk, then sponge it with warm water.

2. Try dabbing a Q-Tip in rubbing alcohol then using the Q-Tip to slowly work on the ink mark. My only concern is that the alcohol may damage the colour of the leather.

So definitely test this method first!

HAVE A QUESTION? EMAIL ASKCHARLESTHEBUTLER@METRONEWS.CA

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Say 'cheese' for the New Year

Are you having people over to ring in 2012? Serve this healthy version of cheese fondue

Want a trick for starting the year off on a fun and healthy note? Drag out the fondue pot!

This recipe lets you eat sinfully without the sin. The secret is in the blend of cheeses: A low-fat Jarlsberg, a creamy light brie and already low-calorie pecorino Romano make a rich fondue that no one will guess is low in calories and fat.

Traditional cheese fondue can pack 670 calories and 29 grams of fat per serving. This version comes in with just 227 calories and 10 grams of fat.

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The fondue serves four people

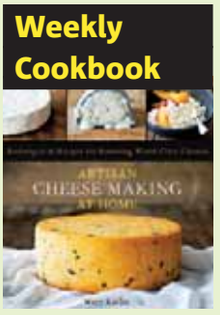
Preparation:

1. Heat broiler. Set top oven rack about 10 cm (4 inches) below broiler.
2. Cut crusts off slices of bread. Cut each bread slice into 4 equal strips. Wrap 1 bread strip halfway around one grape and poke long metal skewer through bread and grape so skewer is pushed through both ends of bread strip with grape in middle. Repeat with remaining bread strips and grapes.
3. Place all 16 skewers on baking sheet. Broil 2 mins. or until bread is browned, turning once halfway through broiling. Set aside.
4. In saucepan over medium-high, bring water and shallot to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, until shallots are tender, about 2 minutes.
5. In small bowl, mix arrowroot with 30 ml (1 oz) of Champagne. Pour remaining Champagne into saucepan with shallot. Whisk arrowroot and Champagne mix into saucepan. Continue to cook; whisk until mixture thickens, 30 seconds.
6. Reduce heat to low and add Jarlsberg, whisking constantly until cheese melts. Add pecorino and continue whisking until melted. Repeat with brie. Season to taste with salt and pinch of cayenne. Pour mix into fondue pot and serve with bread and grape skewers for dipping. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ROCCO DISPIRITO, AUTHOR OF EAT THIS NOW!

Ingredients:

- 4 slices of light whole-wheat bread
- 16 seedless red grapes
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) water
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) minced shallot
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) arrowroot powder
- 125 ml (4 oz) demi sec Champagne, divided
- 125 g (4 oz) Jarlsberg light cheese, finely shredded
- 60 g (2 oz) pecorino Romano cheese, grated
- 60 g (2 oz) light brie, cut up with rind removed
- Salt and cayenne pepper

Weekly Cookbook



Mary Karlin's Artisan Cheese Making at Home is filled with easy-to-follow instructions for making mouthwatering cheese and dairy items.

This lavishly illustrated guide features more than 80 recipes for a diverse range of cheeses: From quick and satisfying Mascarpone and Queso Blanco to cultured products like Crème Fraîche and Yogurt to flavourful selections like Saffron-Infused Manchego, Irish-Style Cheddar, and Bloomy Blue Log Chèvre.

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67

Must be legal drinking age. *Calculations based on an average serving (6 oz glass of wine and single serving of mixed drink). Details at molsoncanadian67.ca

4 sports

Red Wings sent away blue

Canucks continue steady rise up Northwest Division standings with big win over Detroit

4	2
CANUCKS	WINGS

RICH LAM/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Detroit's Valtteri Filppula skates away as Canucks Chris Higgins and Ryan Kesler celebrate Higgins' first-period goal.

Alex Burrows scored what proved to be the winner in the first period Wednesday as the Vancouver Canucks beat the Detroit Red Wings 4-2 in a battle of two of the NHL's hottest teams.

Burrows, who has been lighting it up with the Sedin twins in recent games, gave the Canucks a 3-1 lead with an artful tip of a hard pass to the goalmouth by Daniel Sedin.

It was Burrows' fourth goal in as many games and tied Daniel Sedin for the team lead with 13.

Chris Higgins and Cody Hodgson scored 21 seconds apart earlier in the period to give Vancouver a 2-0 advantage, prompting Detroit coach Mike Babcock to call a time out.

Alex Edler completed the attack for Vancouver, which got 38 saves from goalie Roberto Luongo.

Todd Bertuzzi and Drew Miller scored for Detroit.

Vancouver (21-11-2) won its third straight game and 12th in 15 starts to close within a point of the Northwest Division-leading Minnesota Wild.

The Red Wings (21-11-1), who are chasing Chicago in the Central Division, lost for the second time in seven games.

Both clubs have been climbing the standings after sluggish starts to their season.

Detroit goalie Jimmy Howard, who made 25 saves in a 2-0 home win over the Canucks on Oct. 13, trailed by that score midway through the first period.

Higgins scored his second goal in three games and 10th of the season when he buried Mason Raymond's rebound to give the Canucks a 1-0 lead.

Hodgson doubled Vancouver's lead 21 seconds later after a Detroit turnover in the neutral zone. He skated Jannik Hansen's pass into the slot and banged the puck behind Howard.

Bertuzzi drew the Red Wings to within a goal when a prone Luongo appeared to lose the puck in a scramble in his crease and the former Canuck jammed it home to make it 2-1.

Burrows restored the two-goal advantage with his back-to-the-net tip-in to give Vancouver a 3-1 lead at the first intermission.

After a scoreless second period the Red Wings drew to within one to start the third.

Miller, with his fifth goal in six games, tipped a shot by a falling Darren Helm over Luongo after Danny Cleary did most of the work in the corner.

Edler provided some insurance early in the third period by depositing Hansen's rebound behind Howard while the Canucks were shorthanded to make it 4-2.

Hansen grabbed a puck in the neutral zone and drove to the net, knocking Howard to the ice after he made the initial save.

Canuck Ryan Kesler was in the penalty box for roughing after challenging Kronwall who left his feet to deliver a hard hit to the Canuck centre along the boards. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"We just need to be better, that's all."

DARRYL SUTTER, WHO RAN HIS FIRST PRACTICE AS NEW COACH OF THE STRUGGLING L.A. KINGS ON WEDNESDAY. THE KINGS, WHOSE 72 GOALS ARE TIED FOR THE FEWEST IN THE NHL, ARE ON A STREAK OF 12 STRAIGHT GAMES WHERE THEY'VE SCORED TWO GOALS OR FEWER IN REGULATION.

Bulls reach five-year extension with Rose

Derrick Rose was going down the list, thanking just about everyone who helped him become one of the NBA's best players, when he looked to his right.

Seated off to the side was his mother, Brenda.

"I think I can finally say this now. Mom, I finally made it," he said.

Rose, the Chicago Bulls' superstar point guard and the league's reigning MVP, agreed Wednesday to a five-year contract extension worth more than $94 million US that kicks in next season.

It's fair to say Rose made it long before this latest news conference. The extension is just another stop in a rapid and steady rise from a tough neighbourhood on Chicago's south side to a starring role with his hometown team after being taken with the No. 1 pick in the draft.

He's gone from the NBA's top rookie to all-star to MVP in just three seasons, becoming the youngest player to win the award. That's why the extension was more a formality than a surprise.

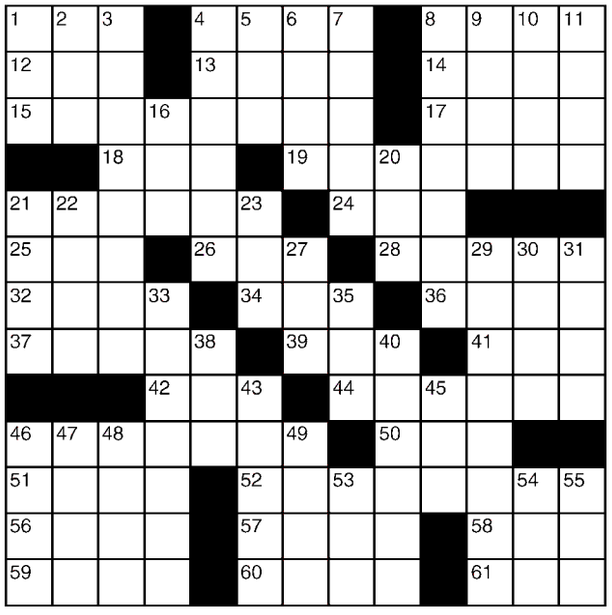
The only thing missing from his resumé is a championship and that's something he hopes to change in his fourth season.

"He embodies all the characteristics that you look for," coach Tom Thibodeau said. "It's a lot more than the talent.

"The talent is the obvious part. Then, when you look at his will to win, basketball IQ, unselfishness, his humility — I think those are the things that you can build a championship-calibre team around."

The Bulls came close to winning it all last year, leading the league with 62 victories during the regular season and advancing to the Eastern Conference final before losing to Miami. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Crossword



Across
1 "Humbug!"
4 Actress Jessica
8 "Pow!"
12 Census statistic
13 Sense
14 Mosque VIP
15 Ball-carrier's target
17 Donate
18 Twosome
19 Beaten down
21 Coarse
24 Definite article
25 Blackbird
26 Gratuity
28 Ballroom dance
32 Baseball team
34 Popular pet
36 Praise highly
37 Trusty horse
39 Young 34-Across
41 Bar supply
42 Caustic solution
44 Recipient's reply
46 Modulate the voice
50 PussyCat's partner
51 Sandwich shop
52 Indispensable aid
56 Plumbing problem
57 Bedouin
58 Neither mate
59 Shaving gel brand
60 Head (Fr.)
61 Ram's fan?

Down
1 Suitcase
2 Earlier
3 Banner
4 Showing buoyancy
5 Mainlander's memento
6 Crooked
7 Watchful
8 "Who cares?"
9 In the thick of
10 Church section
11 Feds
16 Schlep
20 Resistance measure
21 Moving fleet
22 Condominium, e.g.
23 Disencumber
27 Burst
29 Suburban Philadelphia area
30 Dollar
31 Rhyming tributes
33 Thin and slippery
35 Eviscerate
38 Coloring agent
40 "Friends" role
43 Brilliance
45 Puncturing tool
46 Between jobs
47 Require
48 Old Glory
49 Grow weary
53 Adipose tissue
54 Promptly
55 Before

▶ Yesterday's answer

B	A	D		F	A	N	S		H	A	M	S		
A	V	A		A	B	I	T		O	G	R	E		
N	E	T		C	A	L	A	B	O	O	S	E		
G	R	A	N	T			G	O	T					
			A	I	D	A		P	E	R	S	E		
B	U	R	N	O	O	S	E		R	E	E	D		
I	R	E		N	O	T	R	E		D	A	G		
A	G	A	R		M	O	N	G	O	O	S	E		
S	E	P	I	A		R	E	G	S					
			O	W	N			H	O	W	D	Y		
F	O	O	T	L	O	O	S	E		R	O	E		
C	O	V	E		A	R	I	A		A	L	L		
C	H	A	R		H	E	R	D		P	E	P		

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Sudoku

	3		6		7		9	
		9				6		
	4		5		9		8	
	1	8				7	2	
7								9
	5	2				4	6	
	9		4		1		7	
		1				2		
	7		2		8		3	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

3	1	9	2	4	6	8	7	5
5	7	6	8	1	3	2	4	9
2	4	8	7	5	9	1	6	3
9	2	1	4	7	8	3	5	6
7	6	5	3	2	1	4	9	8
4	8	3	9	6	5	7	2	1
1	9	2	5	3	4	6	8	7
6	5	4	1	8	7	9	3	2
8	3	7	6	9	2	5	1	4

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, online at metronews.ca/kiss.

Matthew Hart, You have been my best love since the day I met you and it will be until we part. I love you always, **ROSE YOUR WIFE**

Danai, Hello My Love, I miss you SO much when you're out of the country! I'm missing my other half! What can I do without you?! Who can i gossip with? MISS U AND LOVE YOU! **YOUR LOVE**

CP "Fred" Here goes nothing. Feel like I missed out last nite for sure! Just wanted to reach out and kiss you so tempted after seeing you 2 days in a row, shaved face was so Much better.lol We have a past,(18yrs) and way different future. If ever another chance for us please let us try.. My candle is lit at both ends not sure if yours is too. Hope to hear from you, today would be nice! Hope you see this. xo **"FRED"**

Today 4°/1° Sunny
Friday 5°/3° Rain and snow 60%
The Weather Network Download WeatherEye to your smartphone.
TWN incorporates MSC data

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 Over the next four weeks, you will get numerous opportunities to better yourself. You must take them.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 As the Sun changes signs, your awareness will deepen and many "problems" will cease to exist.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Tread carefully when dealing with other people's money: The potential for trouble is huge.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You are now halfway through your solar year. It's the ideal time to take stock of how far you have come.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 You need to do more in some areas but less in others. Make sure you get plenty of rest over the next few days.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 As the Sun moves into the most dynamic area of your chart today, your confidence will soar and you will start to believe that anything is possible.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 If you feel drawn to a certain person, it is because your fates are connected.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 The Sun is moving into the most social area of your chart and you'll be more open than usual. Embrace it.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 It's time to get serious about improving your cash flow situation. Follow your dream. Make it pay.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 The Sun enters your birth sign today and a new solar year begins. Think big, act big and expect big.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 Stick up for yourself today but don't say too much. Sometimes you are too sensitive to criticism.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. The problem you are confronted with has a simple solution. Stop making things difficult. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Caption contest

DANNY GOHLKE/ DAPD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MUSADEQ SADEQ/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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